

## Embracing Culinary Tourism as a Strategy for Boosting Regional Development: Bangka Belitung Case Studies

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### Abstract

*Culinary tourism promotes regional and national growth. To achieve optimal development, each region must devise a suitable strategy to compete with others. This research aims to create a culinary tourism plan that considers a resource-based view and stakeholder theory. Participants in this study included chefs, tour operators, agricultural tourism business owners, local government tourism representatives, and restaurant and hotel operators. The participant represents both supply and demand. This inquiry used a range of data collection approaches. The data is processed by confirming stakeholder opinions and secondary data and summarising them using a SWOT analysis. Stakeholders provide several strategies based on the SWOT analysis, which AHP then selects. The recommended culinary tourism strategies include price and collaboration.*

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## 1. Introduction

Culinary tourism revives small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and local wisdom (Levyda et al., 2021). Culinary tourism refers to travel intended to purchase or eat food produced locally or to gain knowledge of the methods used in food production (J. S. Horng & (Simon) Tsai, 2010). At the regional and national levels, culinary tourism holds significant importance in terms of development (Rachão et al., 2019). Due to travelers' willingness to spend extra for locally produced meals, culinary tourism serves as both a draw and a catalyst for local development (Nicoletti et al., 2019). The farm industry and SMEs benefit from the multiplier effect of culinary tourism (Kiralova & Hamarneh, 2017; Wondirad et al., 2021). In Indonesia, 30.20% of domestic tourists and 18.14% of foreign tourists shop for food and drink (BPS, 2017).

Culinary tourism offers worthwhile experiences for travelers. One of the most memorable aspects of culinary tourism is local cuisine (Sthapit, 2017). Travelers' experiences with food and drink influence their destination choice (Knollenberg et al., 2021). Local cuisine attracts tourists (Soltani et al., 2021; Stalmirska, 2024) and encourages them to visit (Jang & Eves, 2019). Tourists can obtain cultural experiences from local cuisine (Frisvoll et al., 2016). Experiences with local cuisine influence how long visitors stay (Wondirad et al., 2021) and can foster destination loyalty (Levyda et al., 2023).

Belitung is one of the national priority destinations (Peraturan Menteri Parekras Nomor 11 Tahun 2022, 2022). However, it must compete with other destinations, so Bangka Belitung needs a suitable strategy. Compared to other creative economic sectors, the culinary industry in Bangka Belitung employs the greatest number of people. A Bangka Belitung culinary tourism strategy is essential. The objective of this study is to develop a Bangka Belitung culinary tourism strategy.

## 2. Literature Review

Some authors consider the terms "culinary tourism," "gastronomic tourism," and "food tourism" to have similar meanings and are frequently used interchangeably (Smith & Xiao, 2008)(Stone et al., 2019), but some authors consider these terms to be different (Ellis et al., 2018). According to J. S. Horng & (Simon) Tsai (2010), culinary tourism is defined as visiting to buy and eat local cuisine as well as learning about food production. Culinary tourism, as defined by Smith and Xiao (2008), is any travel experience that enables guests to sample and enjoy local cuisine. This term aligns with both the World Food Travel Association's and the United Nations World Tourism Organization's definitions. Culinary tourism, gastronomy tourism and food tourist activity include dining locally, touring local producers, attending food festivals, and enrolling in cooking classes.

Strategy is very important to win the competition in culinary tourism. Strategy is a process of environmental analysis, strategy selection and implementation (Evans, 2019). Industrial Organization and the Resource Based View (RBV) have dominated environmental evaluation. (Nayak et al., 2023) . Both theories have the same goal, namely achieving competitive



advantage and providing added value to strategic plans. Strategies are formulated based on internal and external assessments. According to the industrial organization (I/O) view, external assessment determines organizational performance. General characteristics, industry environment, and competition determine strategy. Internal conditions follow external environmental conditions. Organizational resources impact organizational success in RBV, and gaining a competitive edge depends more on internal than external variables (Fred R. David & David, 2017) PASTEL (Political, Economic, Sociocultural, Technological, Ecological, and Legal) are the external forces that must be assessed since they may present opportunities or challenges to the business (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012).

Choosing a strategy generally involves using SWOT analysis as the main strategic tool. The goal of SWOT analysis is to identify a core competency's strengths and weaknesses and then integrate those findings into an action plan that will help you seize opportunities and avert threats. SWOT's primary flaw is that it only generates a brief list of broad issues, making it unable to identify the priorities required to choose a course of action. In the early stages of strategic planning, SWOT is more appropriate (Helms & Nixon, 2010). The combination of SWOT and AHP will enhance SWOT analysis (Kurttila et al., 2000). Utilizing AHP offers a quantitative evaluation of the SWOT-recommended strategies (Kurttila et al., 2000).

The RBV states that learning about culinary-related culture, culinary tourism resources, and culinary promotion of tourism are the keys to success (J.-S. Horng & Tsa, 2011). According to Du Rand et al. (2016) the framework for culinary resources depends on factors related to geography, culture, food, and tourism. Alonso and Bressan (2016) discovered that financial resources, product and service quality, local branding, marketing, and understanding of micro and small winery enterprises are all significant culinary tourism resources. Ellis et al. (2018) highlight the significance of studying culinary tourism from a holistic perspective, utilizing five different approaches: management, marketing, social, cultural, geography, and management.

According to Freeman et al. (2021), the RBV theory is incomplete, consequently it must be combined into stakeholder. Normatively, incorporating RBV with Stakeholder Theory enables firms to focus on community values, norms, and ethics rather than just profits. Stakeholders are not edge resources nevertheless they transfer resources. Establishing long-term relationships with stakeholders may provide a competitive advantage. This research involves culinary tourism stakeholders in evaluating the external and internal environment.

Studying tourism can be done from both the supply and demand sides (Stalmirska, 2024). While the supply approach places more emphasis on the tourism resources that contribute to attractiveness, the demand approach concentrates on the opinions, feelings, and assessments of tourists. Whereas tourists describe the demand side, RBV explains the supply side better (Levyda & Marisa, 2018; Valeriani et al., 2020). This study employs a supply-demand methodology. In order to tailor culinary tourism plans to the needs of visitors, tourists are involved in the assessment process.



There is a huge diversity in the ways that academics have proposed for culinary tourism. Smith and Xiao (2008) used facilities, activities, events, and organizations to categorize culinary tourism. Facilities are locations where visitors can purchase or eat delectable meals. Buildings, landscapes, and other locations that are part of culinary tourist itineraries are considered culinary tourism amenities. A classification of culinary tourism based on resources and capability was established by Horng and Tsai (2012). The systems and organizations for promoting culinary culture, the organization of highlight festivals and exhibitions, the organization of facilities and activities related to culinary tourism, and the government's coordinated internal management and external enhancement were among the categories. Mulyani et al (2018) placed a strong emphasis on promoting culinary tourism, business-to-business collaboration, and business education. Di Clemente et al. (2020) suggests diversification in agrotourism, farm tourism, food market and internalization service, as well as collaboration among company, based on agricultural and tourism approaches.

### 3. Research Methods

Developing a culinary tourism plan is a hard process. Ottenberg and Herrington (2013) propose that the strategy formulation be preceded by an evaluation of both the internal and external environment, using multiple theories for review, contrasting the findings of this research with comparable research, using multiple sources of data, conducting structured interviews, and validating the results in an expert panel. The interview results are retained with the knowledge of both parties.

This research uses a supply-demand approach, involving key stakeholders to assess resources and capabilities and key external factors and recommend strategies. The assessment is cross checked with second secondary data or relevant previous research. The stakeholder assessments are compared with other stakeholders and secondary data. The assessment summarized in a SWOT matrix. The matrix was presented at a FGD attended by members from tourism associations such as the Indonesian Tourism Board, hotel and restaurant associations, tour and travel sales associations, chambers of commerce and industry in the tourism sector, and district and provincial governments. The following framework provides a description of the research process.

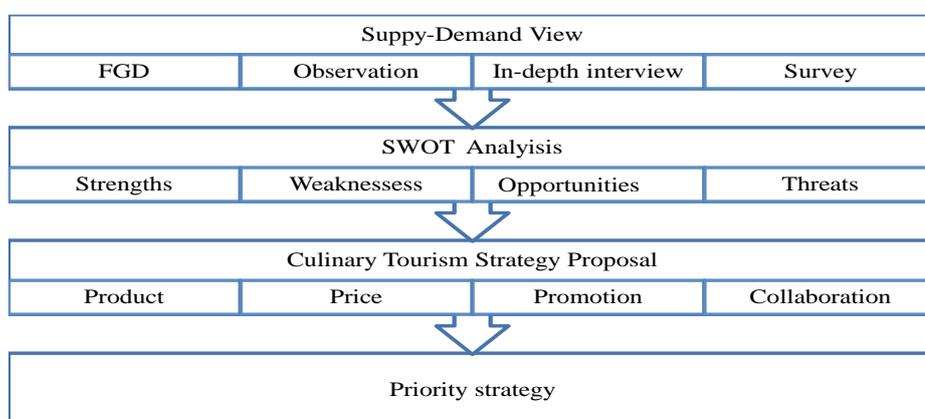


Figure 1. Research framework



In table 1 present the sources and data collection methods.

**Table 1.** Data Sources and Collection Methods

The sources and Code	Data Collection Method	Number of Participant
Tourists (A)	Survey closed and open question	83 persons
Tourism business association (B)	Focus Group Discussion	32 persons
Restaurant owners and chefs of hotel restaurants and local restaurants (C)	Focus Group Discussion	29 persons
Regional government officials in the tourism sector (D)	Focus Group Discussion	6 persons

Sources: primary data

According to Zhang's content analysis criteria (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009), data from participants was processed and assigned participant and content codes. The participation codes are A for tourists, B for tourism business associations, C for hotel and restaurant associations, and D for local government representatives. Participants' ratings are classified as S (Strength), W (Weaknesses), O (Opportunity), and T (Threat). To ensure data validity, primary data is mutually confirmed or cross-checked against secondary data (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2013). The findings of confirmation and cross-checking data are interpreted as strengths or weaknesses, or as opportunities or dangers.

The final step is choosing a strategy. Strategy selection is carried out by the representatives of travel agency associations, hotel and restaurant associations, chambers of commerce in the tourism industry, associations for tour guides, and government tourism officers select the priority strategy. AHP is used to process the strategy evaluation results in order to establish priorities. Four steps—decomposition, comparison judgment, synthesis of priority, and logical consistency—are used to determine strategy while using AHP (Wijono & Ibtu, 2016). Decomposition is a problem definition that is explained hierarchically and is used to solve big problems by breaking them down into smaller ones. Strategic priorities are established in comparative judgment by comparing.

#### 4. Results

The film "Laskar Pelangi" has a significant impact on Bangka Belitung tourism. The film, which was broadcast in 2008, caused an 1800% increase in the number of tourists (Wijaya & Rosikha, 2020). According to the amount of tourists who visit Belitung, Laskar Pelangi has had a higher impact than the construction of the Tanjung Kelayang Tourism Special Economic Zone (SEZ)(Wijaya & Rosikha, 2020). This evidence demonstrates that films provide opportunities.



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Belitung was recognized as a Special Economic Zone. According to the Regent of Belitung, SEZ status provides infrastructure and brand benefits. UNESCO designated Belitung as a Global Geopark. The benefit of the status is that Belitung now has a plan for sustainable development and new branding. It has the potential to increase tourist visits (Nurmalitasari, 2021).

Belitung is one of the top ten national destination (Suryanto, 2017) since it is safe to visit. Belitung is a National Priority Tourism Destination. In 2019, tourists visited Bangka Belitung was 660,632 individuals. The COVID-19 epidemic resulted in a decline in tourism. There were 297,728 visits in 2020 and 313,048 visitors in 2021, respectively. Opportunities for culinary tourism were the visitors. In 2021 and 2022, there were 4,689 and 5,124 flight departures to Dapati Amir Airport, respectively. In 2021 there were 4,686 flight arrivals, while in 2022 there were 5,126 flights. There were 2,110 flights at H.A.S. Hanandjoeddin Belitung Airport in 2022, compared to 2,762 flights in 2022. The number of flights supports the increase in the number of tourist visits. Some Airlines limit free baggage (Ramadhian & Ni Nyoman, 2021). Baggage restrictions are an obstacle to shopping for food souvenirs (Susanty & Yulendra, 2019).

Based on a survey of 38 tourists in Bangka and 47 tourists in Belitung, the amount spent on local restaurants and food souvenirs is described as follows.

**Table 2.** Spending for Food Souvenir in Bangka and Belitung

Spending for food souvenirs	Bangka	Belitung
Less than 100.000 IDR	5,26%	3,22
100.000 – 199.999 IDR	2,63%	16,12
200.000 – 299.999 IDR	18,42%	12,90
300.000 – 399.999 IDR	33,21%	41,93
More than 400.000 IDR	39,47%	25,80

Source: primer data

**Table 3.** Spending for Meal Per Day in Bangka and Belitung

Meal cost per day	Bangka	Belitung
Less than 100.000 IDR	21 %	21,2 %
100.000 – 199.999 IDR	52,6 %	59,5 %
200.000 – 299.999 IDR	21 %	12,7 %
300.000 – 399.999 IDR	0,5 %	0,6 %

Source: primary data

The data in table 2 and table 3 shows that culinary tourism provides opportunities for Bangka Belitung. Tourists' assessments of Bangka Belitung culinary tourism are described as follows:

Tourists agree that the culinary prices in local restaurants and souvenir shops are affordable considering the quality. The meal tasted fairly good. Tourists say that Bangka Belitung cuisine is less diverse, the packaging is less appealing, there are parallels with South Sumatra cuisine,



namely Chinese Peranakan cuisine, and the food's taste is less well-known among visitors. Tourist assessments of culinary tourism are described below.

**Table 4.** Tourist assessments of culinary tourism

Statement	Bangka	Belitung
Restaurant quality	4.06	4
Food souvenir quality	4.29	4
Culinary tourism quality	3.88	4,65
Prices of food in restaurants	3.06	2,94
Price of food souvenir	3.12	3,13
Food is tasty	3.59	4,02

Source: primary data

Akhmad Elvian a Bangka Belitung historian and cultural observer, believes that Chinese civilization has influenced indigenous Bangka gastronomic pleasures (Wiyoga, 2024). According to Akhmad Elvian, several culinary delights have both Indonesian and Chinese names. Tourists argue that halal labelling are essential because some of the visitors are Muslims.

Members of the Indonesian Tour Guide Association, Tour and Travel Association, and Travel Sales Association highlight culinary tourism in Bangka Belitung, which includes visiting food and beverage factories, shopping, honey production, local cuisine, fishing, fruit picking, and festivals. However, the most common form of culinary tourism in Bangka Belitung involves dining at local restaurants and shopping for food souvenirs. The interest in culinary tourism is growing as a result of the emergence of social media used to disseminate culinary tourism experiences. Flight and luggage costs, as well as competition from other destinations, are major barriers to Bangka Belitung culinary tourism. Bangka Belitung's assets lie on its culinary raw materials. The drawbacks include higher food costs, lower quality, fewer representative eateries, a lack of promotion, MSMEs that are less ready to develop, and a lack of government backing.

The findings of the focus group with members of the Indonesian hotel and restaurant association and the chef association revealed that restaurant enterprises do not promote local food sufficiently. Tour operators' interest in offering local cuisine tour packages remains low. They are concerned about the long-term viability of local cuisine since educational institutions do not adequately teach it. The government's efforts to establish culinary arts as a regional brand are still insufficient. The culinary benefits of Bangka Belitung are: The benefits of Bangka Belitung culinary tourism include unique spices, food processing processes, and the freshness of seafood raw materials.

According to interviews with the tourism offices of Belitung, Pangkal Pinang, and Bangka Regency, culinary tourism has enormous potential because all of the raw materials are available and only a small portion must be sourced from outside the island; seafood and other culinary offerings remain the main attraction. Every existing location has tremendous potential, which must be developed and managed more effectively. However, the culinary products registered



remain limited, lack innovation, and are somewhat pricey due to high raw material costs and a lack of promotion. The culinary tourism strategy they propose is a product strategy that comprises enhancing culinary distinctiveness and packaging, expanding advertising and culinary events, and regulating raw materials to ensure culinary selling prices are more competitive.

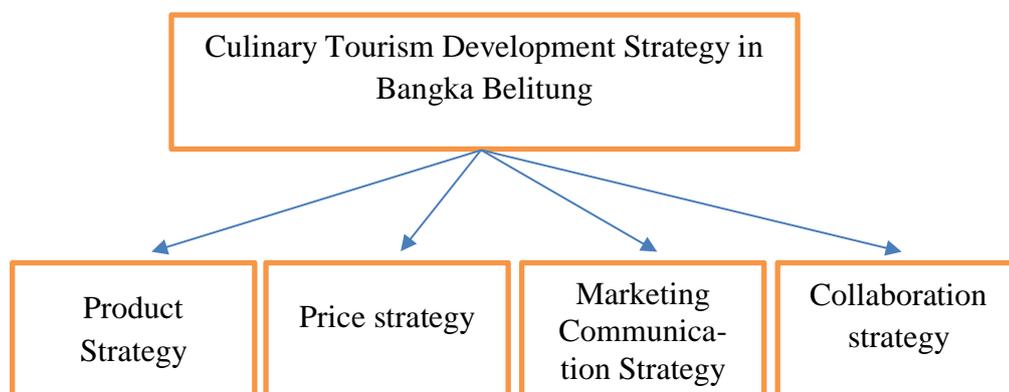
The data was cross-checked and summarized in the following SWOT matrix.

**Table 5.** SWOT of Bangka Belitung Culinary Tourism

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High-quality culinary ingredients, particularly seafood, are produced in Bangka Belitung.</li> <li>2. There are a lot of genuine culinary delights in Bangka Belitung that are based in the local way of life, employing regional ingredients, and have unique tastes.</li> <li>3. A large range of substantial meals, snacks, and culinary souvenirs created from raw seafood are available in Bangka Belitung.</li> <li>4. Because flights to Bangka Belitung are frequent, getting there from Jakarta is not too difficult.</li> <li>5. Belitung is a popular tourist site as well as a top national destination.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Weaknesses;</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promotion of Bangka Belitung cuisine is lacking</li> <li>2. There is little variation in Bangka Belitung cuisine</li> <li>3. Bangka Belitung has more expensive food than other places.</li> <li>4. The variety of culinary tourism in Bangka Belitung is limited</li> <li>5. Bangka Belitung's food presentation and packaging are less appealing.</li> <li>6. The younger generation's shifting tastes continue to pose a challenge to the sustainability of local cuisine, and there is no institution in charge of ensuring this sustainability.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The government considers tourism to be a significant industry</li> <li>2. Many flights are operated to Bangka Belitung</li> <li>3. Unesco's designation of Belitung as a geopark and a national priority destination</li> <li>4. The novel and movie <i>Laskar Pelangi</i>, which popularized Belitung, increased awareness to Belitung.</li> <li>5. Online commerce boosts sales of Bangka Belitung cuisine</li> <li>6. The market for domestic travel is still very large.</li> <li>7. The ability to transport food via cargo aircraft.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The increase in plane ticket prices has caused travel costs to Bangka Belitung to become more expensive</li> <li>2. Competition between destinations is very high.</li> <li>3. Bangka Belitung culinary is not yet popular</li> <li>4. Tourists' acceptance of the culinary flavors of Bangka Belitung is still a challenge</li> </ol>



The recommended strategies are product, price, marketing communications, and collaboration. Products include authenticity, taste, quality, good packaging, and branding. Price is the nominal value that consumers pay. Communication strategies include promotions, and exhibitions (events). Collaboration strategies include B to B (business to business), B to G (business to government), or G to G (Government to Government) cooperation. The hierarchical model in this research can be described as follows:



**Figure 2.** Bangka Belitung's Culinary Tourism Priority Strategy

The assessment by the heads of business associations and local governments in the tourism sector and calculations using the Expert Choice 11 program are as follows.

**Table 6.** Priority Strategy

Priority	Strategies	Wight
1	Pricing	0.40
2	Collaboration	0.32
3	Marketing communication	0.17
4	Product	0.11

Source: primary data

According to Jeaheng et al. (2023) and Levyda et al. (2023) price actually determines gastronomic loyalty, indicates quality, and determines competitiveness. Price is a major consideration for visitors to Bangka Belitung (Valeriani & Putri, 2020) . Bangka Belitung has more expensive food than other places. Fisheries in Bangka Belitung are a major source of fish used in their cuisine. Many Bangka Belitung dishes use fish as a raw ingredient. Bangka Belitung in Indonesia ranks eighth in terms of per capita fish consumption. Fish prices rise in response to increased demand (Sahiddin, 2023). The increase in fish prices in Bangka Belitung is caused by sales outside Bangka Belitung and exports, weather (Dahnur, 2017), According to Dahnur (2017), the increase in fish prices in Bangka Belitung was caused by sales outside Bangka Belitung and exports, the weather, while Mudianto et al. (2015) explained that fuel



costs and fishing operational costs were the causes of the increase in fish prices. Thus, fish as a raw material has both advantages and disadvantages.

The Agriculture, Livestock, Fishery, and Forestry Bangka Belitung industry should offer raw materials to preserve the quality and supply of raw materials since it would please clients, according to Wondirad's (2020) suggested value chain. To keep things running smoothly and their pricing affordable, they collaborate with eateries and processing companies. In order to maintain fair business continuity and competitive prices, food souvenir stores and processed food producers need to collaborate. The industries that supply raw materials, process goods, and manufacture finished goods are all supported by the government.

According to the Tour and Travel Association, food is a destination brand that can be exploited for marketing purposes. A destination brand is significant because it may encourage people to visit and it serve as promotional materials (Freire & Gertner, 2021). Brand branding is a political decision, hence local governments have to decide it (Hanna et al., 2021). Alternative food brands that the Bangka Belitung government can identify include goods that have acquired legal recognition, such as Muntok White Pepper or *Lempah Kuning*. Local governments can also conduct authentic food surveys. Destination brands may use authentic foods such as *Lempah Kuning*, *Otak-Otak* or *Gangan* (Levyda & Ratnasari, 2021).

Culinary festivals have an impact on a destination's reputation and raise its level of competition (Yang et al., 2020). Bangka Belitung has hosted a food festival, but it is not a yearly event, thus it is not on the traveler's calendar. Collaboration is required for marketing this festival in order to make it a huge one. Hribar et al. (2021) suggested collaboration between culinary tourism stakeholders in organizing culinary festivals by involving local residents, culinary experts, local culinary producers, restaurant associations, tour operators and mass media.

Although Bangka Belitung has culinary tourism potential, much of it has yet to be developed as such. Bangka Belitung is the leading producer of white pepper in Indonesia. The Bangka Belitung pepper, also known as Muntok White Pepper, has been grown for generations, has a particular taste, and is now regionally identified (Nusirwan, 2022). Namang's agricultural development center has the potential to become a culinary tourism attraction. The tourist draw is to experience the pepper plantations. Pelawan Forest, which produces honey, an iconic symbol of Bangka Belitung, mushrooms, and Pelawan tea tree leaves, has the potential to become a gourmet tourism destination. To expand Namang's culinary tourism potential, tourism stakeholders must work collaboratively to promote and sell this product.

The manufacturing process might be a culinary tourist destination (Magri-Harsich et al., 2024). Pangkal Pinang's snack production process is similar to that of a snack plant in Gedong Village, Tanjung Pandanan. These factories can provide food manufacturing and shopping services. Currently, food factories are not taking use of culinary tourism prospects. Magri-Harsich et al. (2024) propose that manufacturers increase human resource skills, manufacturing, finance, production process knowledge, and collaboration between factory owners and tour operators in order to make food factory tours successful.



Dining at regional restaurants, shopping for souvenirs, and visiting the Bangka Botanical Garden are among the culinary tourism activities included in the travel agency's Bangka tour package (Levyda et al., 2020). Culinary tourism is currently the most significant consumer behavior. Dining in a local restaurant serving Bangka Belitung cuisine is a crucial way for tourists to learn about the unique cuisine of Bangka Belitung. For Bangka Belitung food to be accepted by tourists and to become more widely known, education and information about it must be provided. For culinary tourism, amenities like restaurants, hotels, and souvenir shops are crucial, but according to tourists, these facilities are not as good. Facilities restaurant, hotel/resort, souvenir shops are very important for culinary tourism, but the condition are unsatisfied (Valeriani et al., 2020). Both the interior design and the level of service provided by local restaurants require improvement.

The food souvenir shop in Bangka Belitung offers food souvenirs including *kempalang*, *kericu*, *otak-otak*, *getas*, *ketam* and *sambel lingkung* (Levyda et al., 2021) Since the quality of food souvenirs influences tourists' satisfaction and loyalty to them, it is necessary to improve their quality. A few aspects that are identical to the quality of souvenirs are the presentation of food, authenticity the packaging, nutrient content, price, and taste. Taste, price, and appearance all matter (Levyda et al., 2021) and product innovation (Ichwan & Nursyamsiah, 2019) therefore food souvenir makers—mostly MSMEs—need to be mindful of these factors. The cost of bags continues to be a barrier for souvenir shoppers. To solve this issue, the central government and regional governments must work vertically together.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Bangka Belitung culinary tourism has great opportunities as it is visited by many tourists. However, it faces the difficulty of rivalry among destinations. As a result, Bangka Belitung must minimize weaknesses in prices, culinary tourist products, service quality, and marketing communication while maximizing strengths in raw materials, distinctive tastes, and a significant number of culinary MSMEs.

The recommended culinary tourism strategy is to broaden the scope of culinary tourism, collaborate to maintain competitive prices and marketing communications, and enhance marketing communications through culinary branding and festivals. The fact that this study solely includes local governments limits its scope. Future studies should involve the tourism ministry because it determines various policies.

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